

Cabinet

Thursday 6 October 2022

PRESENT:

Councillor Bingley, in the Chair.

Councillor Shayer, Vice Chair.

Councillors Drean, Carlyle, Dr Mahony, Patel, Smith, Stoneman and Wakeham.

Apologies for absence: None

The meeting started at 3.30 pm and finished at 4.44 pm.

Note: The full discussion can be viewed on the webcast of the City Council meeting at www.plymouth.gov.uk. At a future meeting, the Council will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

46. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest in relation to items on the agenda.

47. **Minutes**

The Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 08 September 2022.

48. **Questions from the Public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

49. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

50. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader gave his announcements and highlighted –

- a) The Cabinet were tackling unprecedented budget challenges but had not been diverted from delivering on the plans for Plymouth announced in July 2022 to create more higher value jobs, deliver good quality green homes or delivering good education and access to first class health and care;
- b) In the previous week, National Government announced that Plymouth was one of 38 cities in consideration to become an investment zone, a formal expression of interest for the City Centre and Waterfront would be made building on ambitions to revive the City Centre and deliver on much-needed housing;

- c) Successful work was being undertaken with partners through the South West Devon Freeport with £35 million of government funding to begin to deliver business growth and thousands of highly skilled jobs;
- d) The port strategy was about to launch to ensure that Plymouth's coastline delivered high capacity and enhances environmental aspects;
- e) There was a pre-construction design for a new look Armada Way to modernize the landscaping and provide a better space for shopping, playing and relaxing, and would be a key element of ongoing regeneration within the city centre;
- f) The British Arts show would be arriving in Plymouth imminently;
- g) Progress had been made on plans for the West End Health Hub with approval of the business case and work with NHS Devon to secure national funding;
- h) Work had been done with Partners to implement a new out of Hospital service to help people leave acute care and the short-term Care Centre opened at the end of May 2022 offering 24 beds to support Hospital discharge;
- i) Exam results in schools across Plymouth had improved on the previous year, with 59% of primary schools meeting the expected standards at Key Stage Two with Cabinet committed to driving the figure upwards, but it is the first time that Plymouth's outcome is better than the South West regional average of 57 and National Average of 58;
- j) Furthermore, secondary schools were achieving better results with 2022's outcomes historically the best in Plymouth since accountability measures were introduced;
- k) Progress had been made on the development of a council-owned site in Kings Tamerton to deliver up to 70 affordable Net Zero carbon homes, and teams have also been working with PCH on plans for 140 affordable and energy efficient homes in the Millbay regeneration area;
- l) A new Armed Forces Covenant had been agreed, committing to supporting serving and retired service personnel to find suitable accommodation;
- m) The Council had pitched for just under £20 million from central government from the levelling up fund and thanked everyone involved in the bid.

51. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Councillor Mark Shayer (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Finance) gave an update and highlighted –

- a) Welcomed David Northey (Interim S151 Officer) to his new post;

- b) There are a number of positive SWOT analysis' taking place, with businesses from outside of Plymouth getting in touch with regards to what it means and how they can get involved.

Councillor Bill Wakeham (Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene) gave an update and highlighted –

- c) Some machinery had arrived which was making some tasks a little easier, but the Environment and Street Scene team were still working very hard, and thanked them.

Councillor Jonathan Drear (Cabinet Member for Transport) provided an update and highlighted -

- d) The MMA lining work was continuing with a prioritisation on pedestrian crossings and safety areas;
- e) Lining on North Cross Roundabout has been completed, with works halfway through on Manadon, and Marsh Mills scheduled to follow;
- f) The help points across the city are in operation and use of one by a local resident in distress and the situation had gone well;
- g) A meeting had taken place with the Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan (Secretary of State for Transport) at an Aviation Forum and extended an invitation to visit the Forder Valley link road in the future;
- h) Rail at Dawlish, South West connections and the Tavistock to Plymouth line were discussed with Kevin Foster MP (Minister of State for Rail, Department for Transport) and a business case for the Tavistock to Plymouth railway line had been submitted;
- i) A conversation had also taken place with John Holland-Kaye (CEO, Heathrow Airport) where he confirmed they had recognised the importance of regional connectivity and that there is now a process for lower domestic flight landing fees.

Councillor James Stoneman (Cabinet Member for Climate Change) provided an update and highlighted –

- j) A conversation had with Lee Rowley MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Housing)) about how investment zones could work alongside the climate change work being undertaken in the city.

Councillor Dr John Mahony (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) gave an update and highlighted –

- k) The new Mount Gould Health Hub had opened in Mount Gould in conjunction with Age Concern at the William and Patricia Venton Centre which was important to enable residents to access service, reducing the pressure on the health service, be signposted to welfare services, and reduce isolation and loneliness;

- l) There was a Health and Social Care recruitment event on 14 October 2022 at Future Inns, Plymouth from 10am-17pm with interviews and training opportunities available on the day;
- m) A care hotel would be opened at the end of October 2022 following the success in 2021, easing some of the winter pressure on UHP Derriford.

Councillor Charlotte Carlyle (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Children and Young People) provided an update and highlighted –

- n) The work of Tina Brinkworth and her team on the Launch Pad Live, which was Plymouth's largest ever future careers event with 60 businesses and organisations and over 3000 students from Year 7 up.

Councillor Rebecca Smith (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Homes and Communities) provided an update and highlighted –

- o) There was ambition to digitise the planning system to make it more open, transparent and accessible to all communities and local people and a joint bid was put in with South Hams and West Devon, and was 1 of only 28 projects across the country to get funded by the PropTech engagement fund, receiving the highest amount in the country of £285,000 with an offer to bid for a further £235,000;
- p) A new digital engagement platform would be developed with innovative approaches to better understand the way neighbourhoods work and improve public reporting as well as expanding consultation agreements making them more efficient for residents and businesses;
- q) My Place My Views had been launched in July 2022 to engage with residents to ask what they think of their neighbourhoods, facilities and services, and it would end on 17 October 2022, and had received over 1300 responses and was one of the most successful pilots in the country.

Councillor Pat Patel (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Culture, Leisure & Sport) gave an update and highlighted –

- r) The Box had just celebrated its second anniversary and has had 350,000 visitors, despite being closed for 6 months due to the COVID19 pandemic and has had improvements to archives and work to get more schools to visit and the British Art Show launch on 7 October 2022;
- s) Community Economic Development was in progress, with conversations having taken place with 3-4 community organisations around how the Council can support them to become more sustainable and deliver to communities;
- t) The Night Bus would be launching in October 2022 to help get clubbers get some safely with three routes across different parts of the city which had been made possible with funding from the Home Office and is a joint venture with the University of Plymouth.

52. **Response to Scrutiny Recommendations**

Councillor Chris Penberthy (Chair of Scrutiny Management Board) introduced the item and highlighted –

- a) Supportive of the recommendation as it is important that Child Poverty is something the Council addresses;
- b) Important to rely on trends for data and both short and long terms solutions are needed;
- c) Important to get the NHS more on-board, particularly in relation to dentistry;
- d) Should continue to make the most of it as a cross-party member driven Cabinet Advisory Group.

Councillor Rebecca Smith (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Homes and Communities) added –

- e) Welcomed Scrutiny taking it as an agenda item regularly which will enable the Council as a whole to keep delivering on tackling child poverty;
- f) One challenge relating to the action plan was to find balance with flexibility to ensure measures are in place to look at delivery; flexibility is inbuilt within the existence of the group;
- g) Partnership working was fundamental and provides regular opportunities for politicians as well as voluntary and public sector personnel to engage with each other;
- h) The measure and outcome will provide better opportunities for scrutiny committees, the Health and Wellbeing Board and Corporate Parenting, as well as the working group;
- i) Dentistry is a pressing issue and it will be on the action plan for the next 3 years and it is key to engage with partners;
- j) Focus is on breaking the cycle of poverty and enable children to experience living outside of poverty themselves and as they become parents themselves, with a holistic opportunity for children, young people and their families to see themselves out of that cycle.

The Leader added –

- k) Thanked the Scrutiny Management Board for their recommendations;
- l) Demonstrated the importance of cross-party working and importance of scrutiny of decision making.

The Committee considered comments from the Scrutiny Management Board and agreed to approve the prepared response.

53. **Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-25**

Councillor Rebecca Smith (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Homes and Communities) presented the report and highlighted –

- a) Plymouth’s Future was launched in July 2022, a delivery plan with a focus on ensuring that everybody living in Plymouth had access to decent education, a well-paid job and a good home, as well as first-class health and care;
- b) Every child in the city should be inspired and get the same chances and opportunities, and where relevant, get the support to break the cycle of poverty;
- c) The Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-25 set out how the Council hoped to achieve the aims with Partners across the city in commercial and voluntary sectors;
- d) It was the culmination of cross-party working via the Cabinet Advisory Group and had been scrutinised, and recommendations acknowledged;
- e) Some of the outcomes and measures would be looked into further by the working group, and results brought in front of Cabinet in the future.

In response to questions it was explained -

- f) The impact of the cost of living crisis was taken into consideration for the action plan and tested with Partners and it was from that, that the Cost of Living Taskforce had come;
- g) There are pillars in the plan designed to break the cycle of poverty for families who had already been experiencing poverty, but the Cost of Living Taskforce would link in to the Child Poverty Working Group.

Cabinet agreed to approve the structure, content and outcomes of the DRAFT Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-25 so that the Cabinet Advisory working Group can continue to strengthen, provide leadership to and challenge, the city’s performance and response to child poverty over the next three years.

54. **Cost of Living Update**

Councillor Rebecca Smith (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Homes and Communities) presented the report and highlighted –

- a) The Council was in the process of putting together the package of items that would be delivered;
- b) The Cost of Living Taskforce had been set up to bring together a wide-range of key stakeholders who were experts in delivering alleviation to specific aspects of poverty,

but had joined together for a consistent approach;

- c) A cost of living framework was being delivered and the taskforce would focus on taking action and not just analysing the problem, and The Council would lead in ensuring support was delivered;
- d) There was a hope to provide a consistent and sustainable approach to food support with multiple partners;
- e) A strategy plan would be put in place to inform people about what was already happening in the city, and what was coming.

Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health) added –

- f) The types of households who would be affected by the cost of living crisis were broad but included those on low incomes, single person households, older people, younger people setting out on their own, households with an unexpected significant event and people with disabilities including significant mental health issues;
- g) Even short-term winter issues could have a lasting impact on households including finances with debts and high interest rates, as well as for people living with illnesses who could be at higher risk living in a cold home;
- h) The aims of the cost of living taskforce were to work with Partners across the city to help co-ordinate activity that was already happening between organisations working with their communities, building on existing relationships the Council had;
- i) Vital that the messages to promote awareness and improve access were clear; there was already a Cost of Living Hub on the Council website;
- j) First theme was managing finances which included education to help ensure people were aware of benefits they were entitled to, support to find affordable repayment plans, awareness of high risk-high interest loans etc;
- k) Second theme was managing at home which included heating and eating and ensuring that people had access to low-cost, affordable, healthy food in moments of crisis and longer term, as well as poor quality housing and how people would be supported as it was a factor that could exacerbate the impact of fuel price;
- l) Third theme was supporting mental health and well-being and the need to recognise the impact the crisis could have on this and that signposting was there to support people facing difficult choices and how could they be helped so the choices add to their long term health;
- m) Had to be a graduated response with urgent crisis support as well as targeted support to at-risk households and building resilience;
- n) Household Support Fund was about to enter its third phase which provided funding to support organisations in getting support to their communities and some direct

support to some households across the city;

- o) A warm spaces development plan would be looked at to link a range of spaces that might already be warm to save people heating their own homes, as well as what employers can offer staff with the Council having schemes such as well-being champions, PAM Assist as well as financial wellbeing workshops and the Council would be encouraging other businesses to do similar;
- p) Key resources were Cost of Living page on the Council website, MoneyHelper.org.uk, Citizen's Advice's Benefits Checker and Qwell (Mental Health Support).

In response to questions it was highlighted –

- q) Work was being carried out with the 3 universities to understand what support was in place for students with strong provisions for mental health, finance and housing support;
- r) Work was being done with the Trading Standards team on resources around scam-busters and loan shark prevention and getting that information on social media and it would be included on the Cost of Living Hub too;
- s) Important that Members share the information available with their residents too.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

55. **Finance Monitoring Report Month 5**

Councillor Mark Shayer (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Finance) introduced the report and highlighted –

- a) The report set out the revenue monitoring position to the end of the financial year 2022/23 with a reported overspend of £6.56 million which was down £2 million from the previous report;
- b) £6 million of non-controllable costs with £3.3 million relating to energy price inflation;
- c) The outturn forecast had been reduced by £1 million which would be confirmed once the detail of government support was made public;
- d) Legacy costs of COVID19 pandemic on Adult Social Care;
- e) High number of people who had required emergency bed and breakfast accommodation across the city;
- f) An in-year recovery plan covering all areas from fees and charges to reserves and contingencies had been developed and accounted for £7.7 million in additional savings including £1.5 million of reserves that were no longer required for their original

purpose.

The Leader added –

- g) Emphasis to Appendix I and understanding the cost increases from areas such as Street Lighting, the Life Centre, Crematoriums and more;
- h) Important to keep services running for the people of Plymouth but the Council has a legal duty to deliver a balanced budget;
- i) Thanked the staff who had been involved in pulling data and savings information together.

In response to questions it was explained –

- j) The £1.5 million of reserves no longer required had been saved from £250,000 from Customer and Corporate Services, £700,000 from the People directorate and £750,000 in savings in the Place directorate following a lack of need for the resources that were earmarked as well as a further £250,000 of savings from corporate accounting and council wide items;

The Committee agreed to:

- 1) Note the forecast revenue monitoring position at Period 5;
- 2) Apply reserves that are no longer needed for their original purposes to offset the in-year overspend.